

RURAL DISTRICT OF SOUTH SHIELDS.

THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE YEAR 1896.

To the South Shields Rural District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

My Annual Report for the year 1896 will give in an abbreviated form the work done during that time by myself and the two Sanitary Inspectors for the maintenance of good health in the District.

As in my last two reports I have divided it into four headings.

- (1) Vital Statistics.
- (2) Prevalence of Infectious Diseases, and the measures taken to prevent their spread.
- (3) General Sanitation.
- (4) Sanitary Requirements.

Attached to the Manuscript Copy of the Report will be found the Tables A. and B., filled up according to the directions of the Local Government Board.

Vital Statistics.

The Area of the District in Acres is 12,369.

The Estimated Population to the middle of 1896 is 15,275.

The General Death-Rate of the District is 12·2 per 1,000 of the Population, excluding nine cases of accidents.

The Zymotic Rate is 1·5.

The Death-Rate from Phthisis ·98.

The Birth-Rate is 29·3.

The Respiratory Rate 2·2.

The Infant Mortality is altogether 103 cases.

I have omitted purposely in these Statistics the population, births and deaths which have occurred in the Harton Workhouse and Jarrow Fever Hospital, excepting those cases which have been sent into these Institutions from the South Shields Rural District.

Notifications.

155 cases were notified to me under the Infectious Diseases Notification Act, as against 156 cases in the year 1895. Of these 107 were Scarlet Fever, 13 Enteric Fever, as against 22 cases in the previous year, 28 Erysipelas, 1 Continued Fever, 2 Puerperal Fever, 3 Diphtheria, and 1 Small-Pox.

PREVALENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

January. During this month 18 cases of Infectious Diseases were notified to me as having occurred in the District. Of these 17 were Scarlet Fever and 1 Diphtheria.

February. 27 cases were notified, 20 being Scarlet Fever, one of which was removed to the Fever Hospital. One case of Small-Pox was removed from Harton village to the White-Lees Hospital, where he died. 5 were cases of Erysipelas, and 1 Enteric Fever.

March. 13 cases were notified, 11 being Scarlet Fever, 1 Erysipelas, and 1 Puerperal Fever.

April. 23 cases were notified, 19 being Scarlet Fever, 1 Enteric Fever, and 3 Erysipelas.

May. 9 cases were notified, 7 being Scarlet Fever, 1 Continued Fever, and 1 Erysipelas.

June. 6 cases were notified, 3 being Erysipelas, and 3 Scarlet Fever.

July. 5 cases were notified, 3 being Erysipelas, 1 Diphtheritic Croup, and 1 Enteric Fever. The latter was at the house of a greengrocer, and at my directions he left the house at once and remained away until the patient had recovered.

- August. 5 cases notified, 3 being Scarlet Fever, and 2 Enteric Fever. One of the latter was at Boldon Colliery, and the other at Harton.
- September. 2 cases notified, 1 Enteric Fever at Boldon Colliery, and 1 Erysipelas.
- October. 14 cases notified, 8 being Scarlet Fever, 1 Diphtheria at West Boldon, 2 Erysipelas, and 3 Enteric Fever. Two of the latter were at Boldon Colliery, and the third was removed from Harton to the Hospital.
- November. 14 cases were notified, 7 being Scarlet Fever, 5 Erysipelas, 1 Puerperal Fever from Harton Green Lane, and 1 Enteric Fever at East Boldon.
- December. 19 cases were notified, 12 of which were Scarlet Fever, 4 Erysipelas, and 3 Enteric Fever. One of the latter was from Boldon Colliery, and the remaining two from East Boldon.
- Summary. As in my report for 1895, I have again to express my pleasure that the number of cases of Enteric Fever occurring in the whole district in the year 1896 shows a great falling off. 12 cases were reported for the whole district, as against 22 cases in 1895, and 32 cases in 1894.

In 1896 Boldon Colliery was responsible for 5 cases, as against 8 cases in 1895 and 19 in 1894.

Whitburn and Marsden during 1896 are credited with 2 cases, as against 11 in 1895.

These figures show a marked improvement, and it may justly be attributed to the improved sanitary conditions existing, and in Whitburn and Marsden to the improved water supply.

It may also be mentioned that the 4 cases which have occurred at East Boldon are all within a short distance of each other, two being from houses in the Back Lane, and two from Prospect Terrace. I cannot exactly explain this, but steps are being taken to ventilate the drains here more efficiently.

During the year epidemics of Scarlet Fever and Measles have been in the district, both being of a mild type.

One case of Small-Pox was reported from Harton village, and removed to the White Lees Hospital.

Four cases of Infectious Diseases have been removed to the Hospital during 1896—1 Small-Pox, 1 Scarlet Fever, and 2 Enteric Fever.

GENERAL SANITATION.

January. My attention was again drawn to the polluted condition of the River Don at Hylton Bridge. The River Don. Nothing has yet been done to remedy the matter, though steps are being taken to prevent the pollution. Mr. Winship, the agent of the farm tenanted by Mr. Shaw at Hylton Bridge, has promised to provide a proper water supply when the spring commences. Analysis of the water supplied to this farm has shown it to be very impure.

Boldon Colliery Subway. During this month I drew the attention of the District Council to the frequent flooding of the subway under the railway leading to Boldon Colliery from West Boldon, and the consequent inconvenience to the inhabitants at Boldon Colliery and Boldon. This has now been remedied.

February. I reported on the condition of the following properties :—

- (a) Armstrong's Buildings, West Boldon.
- (b) Nicholson's Buildings, do.
- (c) Bogmire's Farm, do.
- (d) Lorne Terrace, East Boldon.

The first three properties, viz.: (a), (b), (c) have now been put into a sanitary condition, but nothing has yet been done regarding the defective privies, etc., at Lorne Cottages (d).

Whitburn. A case of Enteric Fever being reported from Whitburn, led to suspicion being thrown on the Milk Supply. The farm house from which the supply was received is a very old one, and the drainage was found to be very defective. This farm is in the front street and tenanted by Mr. Tudberry. A new drain has now been laid and the gullies properly trapped, and no further case of fever has been reported.

March. A house at Cleadon Village, occupied by Messrs. Coulthard and Gibbon, was inspected by the Medical Officer of Health and the Sanitary Inspector. The house was found to be very damp, owing to a defective roof, and also an absence of down spouts. The hearth of the kitchen occupied by Coulthard was very damp. This has now been cemented, and the roof and down spouts attended to, and the dwelling is in a sanitary condition.

Whitburn. Some of the houses in the Front Street, Whitburn, were inspected, and reported as having defective drains and traps. These have now been replaced by new ones.

April. Attention was drawn to the condition of certain ash-pits at West Boldon and Boldon Colliery. West Boldon and Boldon Colliery. Many of the ash-pits at Boldon Colliery are of the large open old-fashioned type, and are in my opinion very insanitary, and it is to be hoped that before long they will be replaced by more modern ones. The complaints of, and recommendations as to the ash-pits at West Boldon have received attention.

Marsden Colliery. I inspected this house and reported "that the yard was very uneven, and is saturated by liquid manure. The ash-pit and scullery walls are sodden from the same cause." I have now to report that the Colliery Company is now repairing the same.

May. During this month I reported on the very unsatisfactory water supply to West Boldon. For Water Supply for West Boldon several weeks the houses in West Boldon were supplied with no water from 12 out of the 24 hours, and the 12 hours when it was supplied was from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. next morning, the time when it was

least required. The Water Supply during the whole of the last 12 months was most unsatisfactory, and the Sunderland and South Shields Water Company did nothing to improve it. They have now, however, placed a pumping station in the village, with rather better results, but it is still unsatisfactory.

Boldon Colliery

A nuisance behind Well's Row, Boldon Colliery, was remedied on my representation.

East Boldon.

In consequence of a drain at The Barracks, East Boldon, being frequently choked owing to its proximity to an ash-pit, I suggested that, in order to prevent this, earth-closets should be substituted for the present ash-pit and privy. Nothing has yet been done.

Cleadon.

A stable at the rear of the farm-house, at Cleadon, occupied by Mrs. Bell, has one of its walls against the kitchen wall of the house occupied Mrs. Temperley. There is a very unhealthy odour in this kitchen, arising, no doubt, from the stable. The latter should be done away with. I regret that this has not yet been done, though steps have been taken to prevent the stable being occupied.

June.
Boldon Bank.
Houses owned
by Mr. Arm-
strong, of the
Old Hall, West
Boldon.

This block of houses, opposite the National School, is tenanted by 4 families. There is only one ash-pit and privy for the use of all these tenants, which is insufficient. The yard at the rear of these houses was very rough, and it has, on my recommendation, been cemented, and the drains and gully have been re-laid.

Curlew Crooks.

A house belonging to the Commissioners, and rented by Mr. Brunton, ought to be properly drained. There is no system of drainage here; and, although the back kitchen is provided with a sink, it is not connected with any drain. The slop-water thrown down the sink, sinks into the foundations of the house. A proper drain, connecting the sink with the cesspool, should be placed here. The roof of the house also requires repairs.

Whitburn.
Well House.

The drains from the stable, cow-byres and house, have been thoroughly flushed and cleaned.

Tyne Dock.

1 Tyne Terrace, 2 and 3 Metcalfe Terrace. Tyne Dock. Owner, Mr. R. Metcalfe, Dean Street, South Shields.—I visited these premises, and reported that the rain-water cisterns of these houses, situated in the washhouses, contain very foul water and deposit, and required attention.

July.
West Boldon.

Several of the gulleys in West Boldon were, during the summer months, giving off very offensive odours. Most of them were found to be untrapped, and were simply acting as surface ventilators. I reported that, in my opinion, they were a source of danger, and I recommended that they should be trapped, and a few more ventilating shafts should be provided. This has now been done.

Coxon's Proper-
ty, The Folly,
West Boldon.

These two houses have for a long time been in a very unsanitary condition. I reported "that they were in a bad state of repair. The roof required attention, and new down spouts were required. The back premises used as coal-houses were practically roofless, causing one wall of the kitchen to be very damp." This property has now been put into a sanitary condition.

Cleadon.
House occupied
by Mr. Brown,
blacksmith.

In an out-house adjoining the dwelling-house, and used as a store-room, there is a tap, beneath which is a water-butt, which receives the waste water. When the butt is full, the escape water flows into a very primitive drain, untrapped, and consequently in direct communication with the main sewer. There is no cause why sewer gas should not escape into this room, which is in constant use. As well as the danger arising from this state of things, there is also great dampness of the wall round and about the tap. I recommended that a properly trapped gully should be laid, but nothing has yet been done.

Whitburn.
Farm at the
South Bents,
occupier Mr.
Douglas.

Complaints having been made of a cess-pit near the high road, I inspected the same. The cess-pit is situated about 3 yards from the high road, and is simply covered in by loose boards. A drain from the wash-house delivers over an untrapped gully, which is connected with the cess-pit. A trapped gully ought, I think, to replace the existing one. The cess-pit being so near the highway should be properly covered in, after ventilation is provided for. Close alongside the cess-pit was lying a large manure heap, and at the time of my visit, a large quantity of liquid manure was standing in the road, there being no means of exit. Drainage should certainly be provided here. The sewer running alongside the farm discharges its contents on to the sides of the cliffs, and the sewage trickles into the sea sand. There was a very bad smell noticeable at the time of my visit. This nuisance should not be allowed, the sewage should be conveyed by a pipe to sea. The owner of this property is Mr. Gibson, of Hull. Nothing has yet been done.

August.
West Boldon.
Farm occupied
by Mr. Tudberry

I reported on the state of a drain in the square behind this farm. The houses in this square are occupied by 5 families, and there are two sinks in the yard. One of the drains in this yard was constantly choked up, and overflowing. There was also no grating over the drain. These defects have now been remedied, and cement has been laid round both of these sinks. The tap in the yard belonging to the farm-house is placed to one side of the sink, instead of over it, and the waste water which should have escaped by the proper channel, saturated the ground round the sink and escaped under the back wall, thereby flooding the yard of the square already mentioned. To prevent this I recommended that the wall behind the tap and the ground about the sink should be cemented to allow the waste water to escape by the sink. This has now been satisfactorily done. The privy accommodation for the houses in the square is insufficient, there only being one privy for the use of 5 families.

Tyne Dock.
No. 30,
D'Arcy Street.

After visiting this house, I recommended that the yard should be repaved or cemented, and that a new privy, built of brick, should replace the existing one, which has only three sides, and is in very bad condition. Certain repairs to the roof of the house were required. These suggestions have now been carried out.

September.
Harton Green
Lane.

Owing to a complaint from George Carr, of Green Lane, Harton, I visited his premises. A nuisance, arising from the pig-stye in the garden next to his dwelling caused the drainage of liquid manure to flow under his house. A notice was served on the owner of the pig-stye, and the nuisance has now been abated.

West Boldon.
The Folly rented
by the Harton
Coal Company.

The roofing of this house is very unsatisfactory. Certain repairs have been done, but they have not proved sufficient to make it water-tight.

- Hedworth. Owing to a reported case of anthrax occurring at Primrose, Hedworth, I visited the field in which the animal had been taken ill, accompanied by Dr. Hill. The case had been dealt with by the Jarrow Urban Authority. The remainder of the beasts remained healthy.
- October.
Laverick Hall. I visited this farm-house again, and am of opinion that the present ash-pit, which adjoins the dwelling-house, should be done away with. The hinds' houses are in a bad state of repair, and require new spouts and repairs to the roof. Repairs are now being proceeded with, and the foundation for a new ash-pit has been laid.
- West Boldon.
Hill House. I requested the owner of this house to build an earth-closet in the yard to replace the old ash-pit and privy, which were situated under rooms occupied as a dwelling-house. This has now been done.
- Harton.
Nos. 14, 18, 20,
D'Arcy Street. Owing to a complaint being received of the condition of these houses, I visited them. I am of opinion that one ash-pit and privy for the use of four tenants is insufficient, but there are difficulties in the way before further accommodation can be provided.
- Boldon Colliery The state of this colliery has been very much improved during the last twelve months. One evidence of this is the decrease of the number of cases of enteric fever. There is, however, yet much room for improvement. Davison Street is unpaved, and for the greater part of its length unprovided with a footpath in front of the houses—this being an absolute necessity. In wet weather, this street is almost impassible. I believe, however, that the street will very shortly be paved. The road to the north of Burton House is also in the same condition, and even worse than Davison Street. This road will also very shortly be repaired. I hope that before another twelve months has elapsed that the large, old-fashioned ash-pits and privies will be abolished, and replaced by earth-closets. The scavenging has been done very fairly, but more attention to sweeping-up, after the ash-pits have been emptied, is required, and also a more systematic plan for emptying the ash-pits would greatly conduce to the general cleanliness of Boldon Colliery. The lane at the back of Davison Street and Heckles Row ought to be paved. It is at present very insanitary.
- Scavenging. The scavenging in West Boldon is not as well done as it ought to be. Here, again, what is required is a regularity in emptying the ash-pits. If this is not done, the earth-closets—which, in my opinion, are the most sanitary arrangement—are a failure. The scavenging at Marsden Colliery and Harton has been very well done, as also that of Whitburn village and district.
- November.
West Boldon.
Turnbull's Property. Complaints were received about a defective drain on this property. This has now been re-laid, and is satisfactory.
- Scott's Build-
ings, Harton
Green Lane. A man-hole in the yard of Scott's Buildings, Harton Green Lane, emits a very offensive odour. I recommended that the key-hole, which was the offending part, should be closed, and a ventilating shaft erected to allow of the escape of sewer gas. The key-hole has been closed.
- December.
East Boldon. I reported on the back premises of a house in the back lane, East Boldon, occupied by Mr. Cuthill. There is here no means of emptying the ash-pit and privy, except through the house. This is owing to the original hatchment of the ash-pit having been built up. The only way of overcoming the difficulty is by building a new ash-pit or an earth-closet against the back wall of the yard, and having the hatchment made in the back street at the rear of the yard. Nothing has yet been done.
- Cleadon. A Local Government Board Inquiry was held at the end of this month to enquire into the proposed sewer for Cleadon. The District Council now await the result.
- Concluding
Remarks. The sanitary state of the district is now much improved in every respect. No houses have been condemned during the past 12 months. Attention, I think, should be drawn to the crowded state of many of the colliery houses. This overcrowding, I think, must account for a great deal of the sickness always present at the collieries in the district. Many houses containing 4 rooms are occupied by 6 or 7 adults, 3 or 4 children, and perhaps a married son or daughter, or a lodger in addition. No doubt this is caused partly by the difficulty of obtaining houses in the district, but the overcrowding is, nevertheless, a fact. Even if there is sufficient cubic area for the number of inhabitants, it must still be remembered that the bedrooms can rarely be sufficiently ventilated, as in a family of adult men, these rooms are occupied the greater part of the twenty-four hours.

And as regards the nursing of the cases of enteric fever in colliery houses, the excreta, it must be remembered, is generally cast into the large, open ash-pits. They may, or may not, be previously disinfected; but the danger that these excreta may act as a focus of infection cannot be overlooked. The supplying of covered pails for the removal of typhoid stools would greatly lessen the chance of infection.

There is still no hospital provided in the district for the reception of infectious cases.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTOR YOUNG'S REPORT.

Mr. Young says: "The scavenging of the district has, on the whole, been an improvement on past years; the Harton district has been very well attended to in this respect—the work having been carried out regularly and systematically by the contractor." He adds that at Boldon Colliery and West Boldon there is still room for further improvement.

The sewers have been regularly flushed, the cesspools cleaned out, and disinfectants freely used in the same.

A new main sewer has been laid at West Harton, and the old one taken up. A new sewer has also been laid to Talbot Road, Harton.

At West Boldon, new sewers have been laid to Mrs. Robinson's property, and in the Brewery Lane. The following properties are now connected to the new sewer (a) Boldon Rectory, (b) Glebe Farms, (c) Bogmires Farm, (d) Nicholson's Buildings, (e) Mrs. Robinson's property, (f) two houses owned by Mr. Codling, and the houses occupied by Dr. Grant and Mr. Storey.

New drains have also been laid to the Black Horse Inn, West Boldon, and to the house occupied by Mrs. Fenwick, East Boldon.

Fireplugs.

Fire-plugs have now been fixed throughout the district.

Dairies, Cow-sheds, and Milk Shops.

The usual inspections have been made. Alterations and improvements have been made to 5 byres at (1) Hedworth-Field-House Farm, (2) High Simonside Farm, (3) Bogmires Farm.

Infectious Diseases.

The various houses, at which infectious diseases have occurred, have been visited, supplied with disinfectants, and the premises, etc., fumigated.

Mr. Young suggests, in conclusion, that all ash-pits, where the contents have to be thrown on to the street before being carted away, be altered to avoid the nuisance, and that all ash-pits, where the bottoms are below the street or ground adjoining, be filled up to 6 inches above the street, and cemented out.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTOR WELSH'S REPORT.

The old property at Harton Village, owned by Mr. Owen, of North Shields, has not been attended to, and is in a very bad state. The drains have been re-laid at Harton Down Hill Farm, the Cleadon House Farm, and the Red House Farm, Harton. The village pond at Whitburn has been cleansed, and the pond at Harton Village requires the same. The hind's house at the Lizard's Farm requires a proper drain to be laid, and Mr. Welsh draws my attention to the want of a proper drain at the West Moor Lane Farm. The Harton Coal Company have effected several necessary repairs to their property at Marsden. The catch-pits on the roadside in Cleadon Village are now being trapped.

SANITARY REQUIREMENTS.

- (a) Paving at Boldon Colliery and at Harton Green Lane.
- (b) The employment of covered pails for the removal of typhoid excreta.
- (c) The alteration of many of the existing ash-pits.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Faithfully yours,

WILLIAM ARMSTRONG, L.R.C.P., etc.,

Medical Officer of Health.

RURAL DISTRICT

OF

South Shields.

MEDICAL OFFICER'S

ANNUAL REPORT,

1896.
